Greenhouse Gossip

PUBLISHED MONTHLY FOR THOSE INTERESTED

Vol. 4
No. 3

FIGHT FLORAL CO., Inc.
22 W. 26th Street, New York 10, N. Y.

MARCH
1945

"Lighted asters pay dividends"

Although the use of additional light on Asters is an old story, the practice is not used to any great extent. Yet it enables the operator to speed up production at little additional cost and inconvenience. Whether Aster cloth is available or not, it is quite possible to grow Asters for a July crop this Spring. The use of cloth will eliminate the danger of yellows and will produce longer stems and higher quality. But even without the cloth a good crop may be produced if precautions are taken to spray the plants often enough to keep leaf hoppers down. These are the spreaders of the "yellows." Besides, earlier production reduces some of the infestation.

The method has been described often enough, but we repeat because so many people fail to remember from year to year. We were almost shocked last year to note in a contemporary publication by another seedsman that after some ten years or more of the advocacy of the method, it was prescribed as something "fresh out of the oven." Anyway, sow the seed about March 15 (depending on date of planting outdoors). Prick off into bands or pots or directly into flats and a few days after start to light. You can use 25-watt lamps, spaced 5 feet apart and suspended about 2 feet above, for four to five hours each day beginning at dusk. Continue lighting until the plants are set out of doors. Actually the additional light is given daily for about four to five weeks. Hence if you count back from the safest day of setting outdoors, you'll arrive at the time of sowing seed and lighting. The suggestion for sowing seed March 15 is based on the setting out date of about May 7 or 8. Lighted and treated in this fashion, the Royals will be ready to cut about the first week in July.

A note of warning should be sounded in connection with Aster growing. Most varieties are subject to wilt despite claims to the contrary. We know of only one strain which really is strictly wilt resistant (Tilford's, Ohio strain) but it is not for sale as yet. Hence every precaution should be used to reduce disease. The wilt organism enters the plants through injuries of roots and stems. As a consequence it is safer to grow the plants in pots rather than in bands or flats, because little disturbance and breakage of roots takes place when planting. Of course, where soil sterilization is feasible, wilt is reduced to the minimum.

In growing the Asters after planting, do not pinch the center flower. Disbudding of stems, if labor permits, is advisable so as to have only one flower per stem. The average number of

stems to be expected per plant is six to seven. For best results the planting distance should be 10x10 or 12x12 inches. Closer planting will not give as good quality and may increase damage from wilt due to lack of air circulation between plants.

PLANTS KILL BUGS. Five or six years ago we noted a report in a journal devoged to entomological research dealing with the use of sodium selenate for the control of red spiders on Carnations and Roses. The work was done by Dr. Neiswender of the Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station. It showed rather satisfactory results on Carnations but only fair kill on Roses. This work was followed up by Dr. Blauvelt of Cornell and was reported on at the recent short course for florists at Cornell. He secured rather striking results with one application on Carnations, which were thenceforth free of red spider, aphids and thrips. Good results were also obtained on stock Mums, where in addition to the above named pests, midge was also controlled. On Carnations the material was used at the rate of ¼ gram to a square foot, diluted in water. A stock solution was made by dissolving about 3½ ounces of sodium selenate in 1 gallon of water. This was used at the rate of one quart to 25 gallons of water and applied to the soil at the rate of one gallon to four square feet or 25 gallons to 100 square feet. For Chrysanthemum stock plants the total amount was doubled but was applied twice at one week intervals in single doses.

Although this is still in the experimental stage, the results thus far obtained with Carnations and Mums justify the hope that this will be a striking use of introducing materials into plants to kill bugs. We understand that in addition to this method a dry application will soon be on the market which may be applied just like any fertilizer. Those who wish to try the method should do so on a small scale to become well acquainted with it before plunging headlong into it. We feel sure that Dr. Blauvelt of the Department of Entomology, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y., will be glad to give further directions and instructions in the use of this material to anyone who writes to him.

CARNATIONS. The short courses at Cornell and Ohio State gave a chance for considerable airing of some controversial points about Carnations. Many of these, however, are not so controversial when varying climatic conditions and other factors are considered. Let us take some examples.

Soil Sterilization. Most growers concede that lack of labor has made them conscious of the saving of effort in sterilizing soil. After using steam sterilization they concluded that if done properly just as good results may be expected as from fresh soil. However, some sections are still leery of the system. Part of it is prejudice and part due to improper temperatures and length of steaming. The best recommendation is to incorporate manure, steam for one hour at 160–180 deg., uncover and plant as soon as the soil is cool enough. If a thorough job is done, we are sure you'll like it.

Sub-irrigation. This is probably just as good as surface watering in porous, well drained soils. Where it works well, there's a great saving in labor. Some prefer to water overhead during the extremely dull days of Winter and sub-irrigate in the Spring and Summer. This method, like gravel culture, requires V-type beds, waterproofed to retain water.

Gravel Culture. We have seen some very excellent crops of Carnations, grown consistently well, year in and year out. Where it does not work is because instructions are not followed and not because of the notion that a chemist is required to do the job. If tried, the suggestions should be followed through, and the very fact that a grower is not a chemist or plant physiologist is proof enough that he should not try to use his own notions of betterment. When he does, he usually goes haywire and then cusses the method.

Field vs. House Growing. In localities where Summers are extremely hot, without cooling off at night, the better practice is to set Carnations outdoors and bring in in July. Bigger plants with more vigor will result. Where nights are cool enough to produce sufficient breaks under glass, then that methodis commended because it saves labor. As to greater disease in field grown plants, we recommend the method advocated by Ohio State of growing plants outdoors in steam or Larvacide sterilized beds, the plants set 6 inches apart. Such a method is practical if beds are close enough for the use of steam. Much labor in cultivation and weeding is saved and fertilization, watering and spraying is under perfect control.

Growing for More Than One Year. Again in localities with reasonably cool nights during the Summer, many varieties do well during the second year, frequently giving higher production than the first year. Of course, if a dose of spider is contracted during the Summer and not controlled, the method is hazardous.

ARE YOU GETTING READY FOR MUMS? If so, be sure your cuttings are free of wilt. Sterilize your soil to prevent infection. Try planting rooted cuttings, they save labor. Start spraying early to avoid insect infestation. Avoid maturing too many during the midseason. Try growing better quality by not leaving more than four or five stems per plant

on Pompons. Don't grow too many single stem standards. They are too big and too costly. Two or three to a stem will sell just as well at a greater profit. Some plant two plants to a hill. That's rather wasteful of cuttings, although we grant that quality may be better. Shade good varieties in succession to give you continuity of bloom. Wrap Pompon heads in paper to insure better quality on arrival.

VICTORY GARDENS. Are you going to help again this year? There is so much contradictory advice about the food situation that it pays to play safe. We are told that the canning pack is way down and hence the need for fresh vegetables is greater than ever. Let's believe that at any rate and do what we can. This is especially important since the directives of last Fall made people believe that supplies were adequate. The florists did an excellent job during the past two years. Let's not fall down this year.

A NEW WEED KILLER. Among the newer organic chemicals developed recently for horticultural uses, one stands out in particular because it has many seemingly contradictory properties. It is called TCP for short (trichlorophenoxy acetic acid) and has been used as a growth promoting substance to induce quicker rooting of cuttings, as a preharvest spray to reduce the loss due to fruit drop in Apples, as an aid in setting fruit in greenhouse Tomatoes during Winter, to increase yields in Potatoes and likewise as a Potato dip to prevent them from sprouting in storage. Now we find it useful and efficient as a weed killer, without the usual drawback that such materials had in the past. It is noncorrosive to spray equipment, does make soil barren and useless and is not inflammable.

At present the weed killer may be bought under the trade name of Weedone. It is sprayed on living plants and shows its effect slowly, but surely. Those which are killed by it are Poison Ivy, Japanese Honeysuckle, Ragweed, Bindweed, Plantain, Dandelion, Burdock, Checkweed, Thistle, and some woody plants like Wild Plum, Wild Cherry, Blackberry and many others. However, some plants show definite resistance to it. Thus Blueberry, Azalea, Laurel, Huckleberry are not affected. Quack grass cannot be killed with it, while Bluegrass is affected only in Spring and late Summer. Hence under ideal conditions Weedone may be used in lawns containing Bluegrass to kill other weeds. This, however, means its use during Summer only while the grass is dormant. Bent grasses are killed quickly and so is Crab grass in young stages.

PROGRESS. It's sometimes difficult to understand why so many people feel it necessary to impede progress. We heard just recently a statement made that the automatic sub-irrigation method of watering advocated by Cornell is not possible or practical, but upon pressing the matter further we could not elicit a satisfactory reason for the "crack." In the same way we just read in a little book, often more full of fancy than of fact, that the men at Ohio State "show a lack of appreciation of all that is involved," when they state that a florist does not have to be a chemist to run gravel culture. That's exactly it, the man writing that stuff had some trouble just because he felt he was a chemist and was forever trying to improve. Progress does mean improvement but not by guess and by gosh methods. We agree thoroughly that any new discovery should have a thorough trial before being advocated for practical use, but if we ever get anywhere we can't throw up our hands in horror at anything which is beyond our present ken.

CULTURE OF GREENHOUSE ROSES—Alex Laurie and D. C. Kiplinger. Ohio Agr. Exp. Sta. Bul. 654. December, 1944. This bulletin comprising 94 pages is really a handbook for the Rose grower, covering every phase thoroughly and presenting data relating to some of the newer findings. Those interested in the culture of Roses under glass will do well to secure it. It will be sent free of charge if you address the Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station, Wooster, Ohio.

MORE ABOUT FERMATE—A. W. Dimock, Cornell University (taken from Facts for Florists). In the realm of plant disease, Fermate (ferric dimethyldithiocarbamate) is holding its place in the headlines about as well as penicillin, in the realm of human diseases. And like pencillin, it is not a cure for all diseases, yet is amazingly effective for a very wide range of troubles. In the past, we have discussed its usefulness for control of Septoria leafspot of Chrysanthemums, of the true rust diseases, such as Carnation Rust, Snapdragon Rust, and Chrysanthemum Rust, of Alternaria Leafspot and Branch Rot of Carnations. Only recently we have reported its usefulness for control of Botrytis blight or "fire" of Tulips.

Sometime ago we urged caution in accepting a report that Fermate would control mildew on greenhouse Roses. This did not agree with our own results on field-grown Roses nor with the results obtained in the field with other powdery mildews. Yet, being open-minded, we did try it in our own Rose range, making applications after each syringing and at other times when slight traces of mildew began to develop. So far it APPEARS that the treatments are keeping mildew in check! We say "appears" since the whole range has been systematically treated, with no checks left. Furthermore, the wetting

agent used was Vatsol K, which in itself is highly toxic to mildew. Be that as it may, our past experience has indicated that under our conditions, with a little mildew present at all times, the disease would spread rapidly through the range unless a fungicide was used. Sulfur was effective but seemed to cause yellowing and dropping of the foliage, while malachite green was disagreeable to apply because of its staining properties. Fermate has not cause leaf drop nor has its use been disagreeable to the operators. Credit for suggesting its use for Rose mildew goes to Ohio State University.

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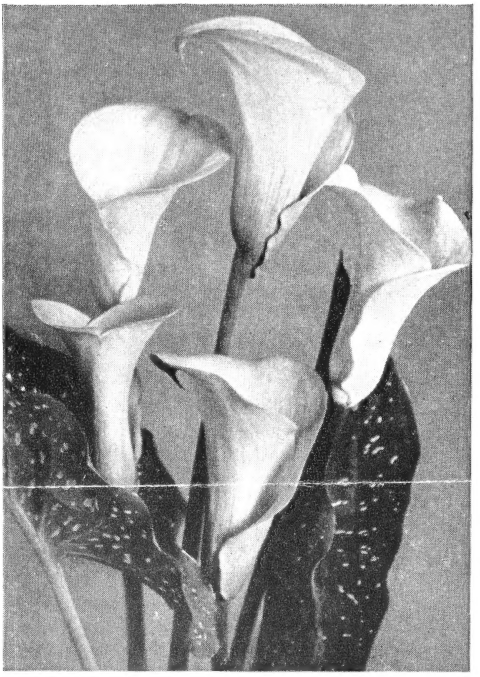

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